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A CITY HALL

BY

JOHN BALDWIN HAWLEY

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FOR THE

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

IN

ARCHITECTURE

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

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DEGREE OF

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ARCHITECTURE

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A CITY HALL

Table of Contents

	page
1. General Considerations.	
Definition, history, and requirements -	1
2. Program - - - - -	5
3. Solution - - - - -	7
4. Bibliography - - - - -	9
5. Photographs of Drawings - - - - -	11



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A CITY HALL

Sturgis' definition of a City Hall is, "The chief public building of a city - that in which the mayor's office, and generally the chambers of the legislative body, are located, together with offices for officers, and perhaps some court rooms for city courts."

In considering the subject of town halls and municipal buildings it is worth while to recollect the guilds of England which formed the nucleus of town government. Much of this history is obscure, but we know that they were generally established by the close of the thirteenth, and were able to counterbalance the nobles during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The first guilds probably met in private houses but as their power extended they felt the need of a central meeting place, and thus arose the guild hall, which we may regard as the simple building from which the modern town hall and municipal buildings have evolved during the lapse of centuries. The guild hall was, of course, essentially the place where the guilds met to discuss affairs. Later, with greater needs and altered forms of council - the guilds having lost their power and been succeeded by a body of elected townsmen - a larger hall was required with some accommodations for the mayor, the clerk and his assistants. Requirements continued to increase, and by the nineteenth century a

large number of rooms had been added to the hall that was once the sole apartment. The requirements of town government still increasing, we find that the town hall proper ceases to exist, being represented by the council chamber in which the councillors and aldermen meet to transact the business of the town, while a surprising number of new offices have sprung up into existence, occupying by far the greater part of the site.

A still farther development presents itself in the sub-division of some parts of the building. Not infrequently the police court, library, museum and fire station are gathered together with the town hall and municipal offices, forming the chief block in the town, but as demands increase all these become separated, and thus in the city of to-day the library and museum form one building, the fire station another, the police and law courts still another, while the actual town hall, used for common purposes of the town, such as concerts, meetings, etc., is represented by a number of places, chiefly under private direction.

Municipal government was continually extending, and a number of additional rooms had to be provided for the corporation staff and officials. New town halls were being erected all over the country to meet the growing needs, and at the time of the Gothic revival such buildings felt the full force of this most noteworthy movement. Great towers and gaunt pointed roofs offered the Gothicism fresh scope for his fancy. In several cases



the effect was undoubtedly successful, but in the small towns where the funds were strictly limited some of the most atrocious town halls were perpetrated by dull architects with the Gothic fever upon them, - ill proportioned medleys spread over with lumpy carvings.

In France the government is somewhat different and a good example of their administrative buildings is shown in Paris where the city is divided into twenty wards. While the Hotel de Ville, or City Hall, is the municipal center, the local mairie of each ward is the place looked upon by the inhabitants as their town hall. The mairie is not merely an office for the registration of births, marriages and deaths, but its sphere of action and influence is largely extended by the fact that the mayor is ex-officio, President of the Board of Charity, of the School Committee, of the Health Committee, etc. A perfect mairie is one which can be utilized for holding grand ceremonies, and which is at the same time thoroughly adapted to suit the convenience of the officials and of the citizens. The remark which has been made specially about the Hotel de Ville, applies in general to nearly all of the twenty mairies of Paris - that the majority of these buildings are ill adapted for offices, which is the purpose they were chiefly intended to serve. The corridors and stairways are too large, and the rooms are too small.

In America the development has been much the same as in England. Meeting houses or churches were first



used for all public meetings by the first settlers, and the development has been gradual until we now have some splendid examples of City Halls. No definite style has been followed as the material available for such buildings varies widely. The classical style seems to be the favorite, however, as it gives more dignity and repose to the building and gives it more character.

It may be taken as a general rule that such buildings consist of the municipal offices proper, including the council chamber, and several committee rooms, and occasionally a series of rooms intended for reception purposes. Second in importance to these come the administrative departments, consisting of the clerk's office, and ranges of offices for the engineer and surveyor, the accountant, the rate collector, the auditor, and the medical officers, with special departments in certain cities for exceptional offices, such as those of the water works manager. In many cases a large town hall, intended for public meetings, concerts, etc., has to be provided also, while Law Courts are not uncommonly included within the same building, and sometimes a fire brigade has also to be housed within it.



PROGRAM

In the heart of a city of fifteen thousand inhabitants is located a "Public Square" which serves as a small park. On three sides, facing the square, are located business blocks. It is proposed to erect, on the fourth side facing the square, a City Hall which shall fill the requirements of such a building and at the same time will have a quiet dignified character, to offset, more or less the severity of the business blocks.

The rooms which must be provided are as follows:

Basement.

Police headquarters.

Lockup.

Small kitchen.

Janitor's room.

Storage rooms.

First Floor.

Entrance vestibule.

Offices for:

City Clerk.

City Treasurer.

Tax department.

Police Matron.

Juvenile room.

Vaults and toilet.

Second Floor.

Council Chamber.

City Court Room.

Mayor's Office.

Judge's Office.

Committee rooms.

Jury Room.

School Board Room.

Toilets.

Third Floor.

City Engineer's office - with drafting rooms.

Health department.

SOLUTION

As a preparation for this problem in design a careful study has been made of city and town halls throughout this country, as well as the buildings answering the same purpose in England, France, Germany and Belgium. The foreign buildings are not used for quite the same purposes as the governments vary in the different countries.

The objection has been raised that the French buildings have too much space taken up by vestibules, corridors, and lobbies. In the United States the tendency has been to be economical with public space and to devote the room to offices. An attempt has been made in this design to properly proportion the public space, or corridors, vestibules and lobbies, to the office room.

Believing that the offices most used on the first floor are those of the City Clerk, Treasurer and the Tax Department, they have been arranged as convenient for the public as possible, so there would be no difficulty in locating them. The Juvenile headquarters and Matron's room are given a position farther from the entrance as they are of less importance.

On the second floor a lobby has been arranged so as to accomodate both the City Court room and the Council Chamber. These rooms will seldom be used at the same time, so one lobby should be sufficient. The Mayor's office is given its proper location close to the

Council Chamber, while the jury room and judge's office are located off the corridor leading to the City Court room. The other offices of the building are located, as nearly as possible, in order of their importance.

An elevator is provided from the basement to the third floor to accomodate the general public as well as to use for the prisoners who must be brought from the basement to the second floor for trial.

The greatest difficulty was encountered in designing a tower which would be in keeping with the rest of the design. It was thought best to use a tower, more as a matter of precedent than of utility. Many sketches were made of examples in Belgium, France and Italy, as well as in the United States. The final result was a tower much like the one used by Allen and Collins on the City Hall at Marlboro, Mass. This seemed to be more in keeping with the classic order and the general design than any other tower scheme.

If this design has been successful I wish to give due credit to the firm of Allen and Collins whose City Halls have been carefully studied, and from whose work I have received inspiration for this problem.

Approximate cost \$275,000.

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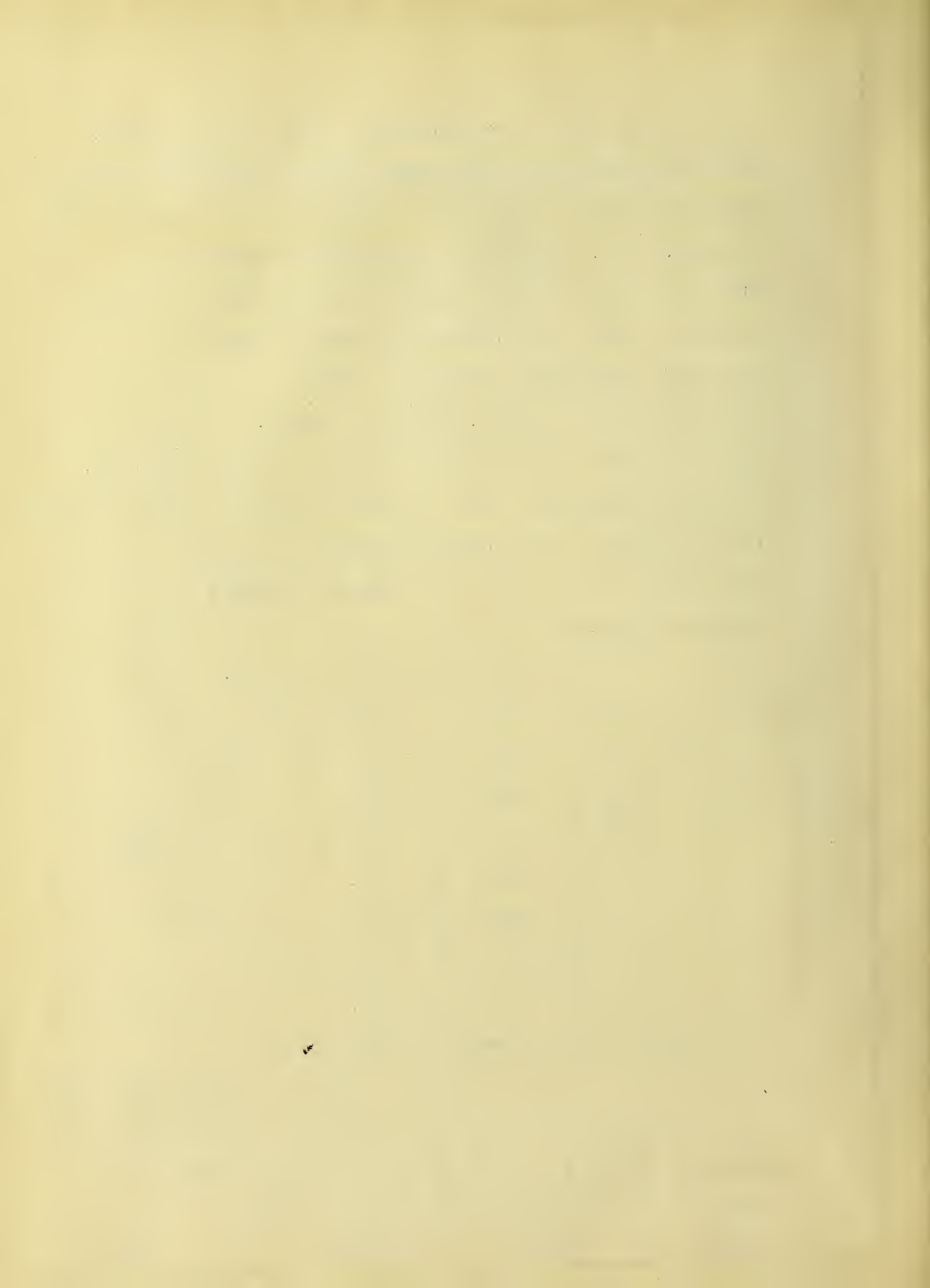
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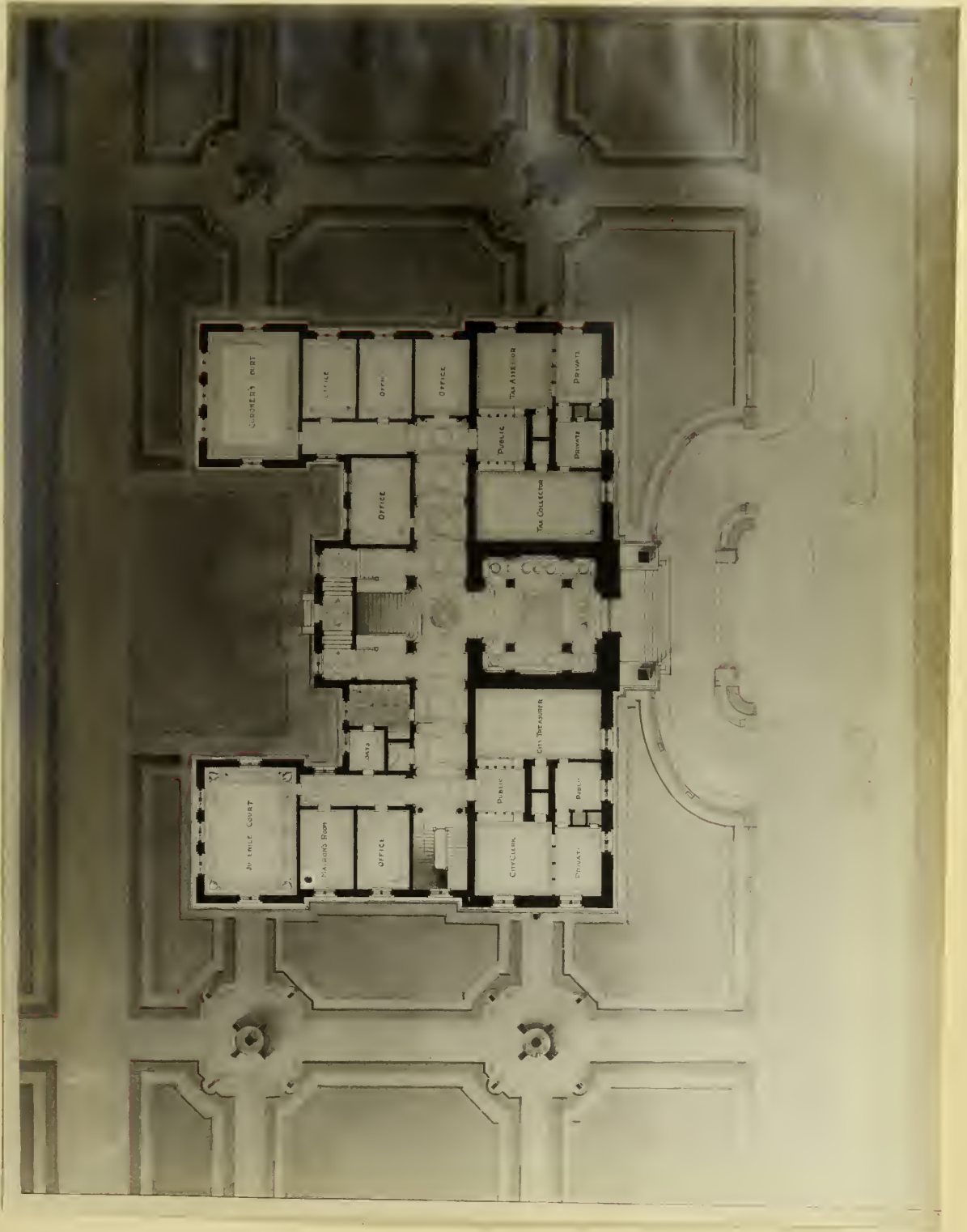
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